5.0 Reported Roadway Problems and Deficiencies

Reported problems, deficiencies and issues with the existing US-91 were expressed at the forums described in Section 4.0 above. Many of the comments were applicable to the corridor while others were site specific.

5.1 Corridor Long Issues

Several issues were identified by the public that pertain to the majority of the US-91 corridor. These are summarized below.

- Obstacles adjacent to travel lanes with the clear zone. Power poles, mail boxes, guardrails, trees, and highway signage occur too close to the travel lanes, and do not conform to current clear zone requirements. This proximity can contribute to accidents as well as adversely affecting the ability of wide vehicles to safely travel the highway.
- Skewed intersections with US-91. Many county roads and city streets intersect US-91 at a skewed angle. The alignment of the highway is generally southwest to northeast while the county and city road systems are generally north/south and east/west. These skewed intersections contribute to poor sight distance for drivers exiting county roads onto US-91. Skewed intersections make it difficult for large trucks to negotiate turns onto US-91 and from US-91 onto the cross street.
- Agricultural and slow-moving vehicles. US-91 is a farm-to-market roadway. Large and wide agricultural vehicles and large trucks hauling farm produce use the highway. These can impact traffic flow and safety because of slower speeds, lack of maneuverability and width. Large vehicles do not have areas to pull out of the travel lane to let following traffic pass. They also must avoid roadside obstacles close to the travel lanes and encroach into the opposing lane to do so.
- Narrow canal and other bridge structures. Narrow canal bridges do not provide sufficient room to simultaneously accommodate both wide agricultural vehicles and traffic coming in the opposing direction. The crossings of many of these canals are raised, adversely affecting sight visibility.
- Lack of turn lanes on US-91. Most intersections of US-91 with county/city roads do not have turn lanes for traffic turning off US-91. This requires that left-turning traffic slow down or stop in the travel lane, adversely impacting through traffic and contributing to congestion and potential for rear-end accidents.
- Lack of turn lanes on cross roads. Lack of turn lanes on the approaches of east/west county roads to US-91 results in congestion as traffic turning onto US-91 causes all other traffic turning onto the highway or passing through the intersection to queue.
- Proximity of railroad crossings to US-91. The intersections of US-91 with east-west roadways include a crossing of the Union Pacific railroad. The proximity of the railroad to the highway results in raised railroad crossings, and very limited storage space for vehicles waiting to enter and exit US-91. During train passage, vehicles turning from US-91 eastbound onto the east-west roadways may queue onto the highway. The raised grade and closeness of the railroad and US-91 also impacts sight distance at some intersections.
- Perceived substandard vertical curves and sight distance. Where US-91 crosses canals, the grade of US-91 generally rises, resulting in reduced visibility of on-coming traffic for both through traffic and for traffic turning onto US-91 from driveways and roads near to canal crossings. Public comments cited the canal south of Ferry Butte Road, US-91 in the vicinity of Truchot Road, Wooton Way, MP 109.44, and Shilling Road.

- Perceived substandard horizontal curves and sight distance. There are curves along the US-91 corridor that limit visibility of oncoming and turning traffic.
- Lack of shoulders. The existing narrow shoulders do not provide sufficient room for incident management or passage of wide agricultural and other vehicles. This results in both a capacity and a safety issue.
- Bicycle facilities. The lack of adequate shoulders on US-91 means that commuter bicyclists must ride in the existing travel lanes and/or on substandard, rough shoulders.

Problems specific to general geographic areas of the US-91 are summarized below by segment of the corridor.

5.2 Siphon Road to Sheepskin Road (Fort Hall)

The following additional issues were raised by the public for this segment of the US-91 corridor.

- Pedestrian circulation in Fort Hall. School buses currently drop children at a poorly located bus stop. Pedestrians cross the railroad tracks at random, rather than using public road crossings. There are no sidewalks, signage or other accommodations for pedestrians to travel parallel to and to cross US-91 in the Fort Hall area.
- Street lighting in Fort Hall. Street lighting is needed within Fort Hall, including along US-91.
- Reservation Road accident problem. The US-91/Reservation Road is a high accident location. ITD has a project currently under development to improve this skewed intersection.
- Highway drainage. The Agency Road area has storm water drainage problems.
- Agency Road improvements. The intersection of Agency Road and US-91 has sight distance issues, in part related to the proximity and raised grade of the Union Pacific railroad (UPRR). The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes are coordinating with UPRR to identify ways to address this problem.
- Narrow US-91 right-of-way. Between Ellsworth Road and Cemetery Road, the right-of-way is very narrow. Any improvements will likely need to occur outside the existing ROW, raising potential jurisdictional issues.
- Indirect connection from the Fort Hall I-15 Interchange to US-91. The connection is currently circuitous and must use Agency Road to cross the UPRR and access US-91. The Tribes have not yet identified a more direct connection that is feasible.
- Ross Fork Road. The proximity of the UPRR tracks affects vehicles turning from Ross Fork Road.

5.3 Sheepskin Road to South Blackfoot I-15 Interchange

The general issues described in previous sections apply to this segment. More specific issues raised by the public include:

- Ferry Butte/US-91 Intersection. This location needs better signage and turn lanes.
- Sight visibility and turn lanes. The intersections of US-91 and Truchot Road, Bronco Road, and Marshall Road need to be improved.

5.4 South Blackfoot Interchange to Airport Road (City of Blackfoot)

The general issues described in previous sections apply to this segment. More specific issues raised by the public include:

- Airport Road. The reduction from four lanes to two lanes is problematic. Extending the four lane section northward is a priority for the City of Blackfoot.
- Emergency services access to east Blackfoot. Trains crossing the UPRR close several roadways to traffic. Emergency vehicles must then use Shilling to cross the tracks, increasing response time.
- Sight distance intersection issues: The intersections of US-91 with Wooton Way, Rich Lane and Shilling have sight distance issues.

5.5 Airport Road to New Sweden Road (Shelley)

The general issues described in previous sections apply to this segment. More specific issues raised by the public include:

- Pedestrian facilities. There are no sidewalks or US-91 crossings to enable citizens to walk into Firth from properties north of the city or to facilitate crossing US-91.
- Baseline Road. There is poor sight visibility and many accidents at this intersection.
- Center Street bulb-out. The curb at the northeast corner of US-91 and Center Street in Shelley extends out into traffic, creating a potential accident site and congestion point.

5.6 New Sweden Road (Shelley) to Sunnyside Road

The general issues described in previous sections apply to this segment. More specific issues raised by the public include:

- Skewed intersections. Skewed intersections with US-91 at Country Club, Clinger and Canyon Road make access onto US-91 difficult.
- Traffic volumes during rush hour. Residents have difficulty getting onto US-91 from their driveways during rush hour when few breaks in the traffic stream occur.